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| allegory  a narrative that has two separate meanings  *example:* The Crucible, by Arthur Miller, is allegorical in telling the story of the Salem witch hunts while referring to McCarthyism in 1950s USA |
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| alliteration  where two or more words begin with the same sound and occur in sequence  *example:*‘the tingle tongue taste of Gibbs SR’ in a 1950s toothpaste advertisement |
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| allusion  a reference to something completely separate from the text in which it appears  *example:*MacNeice alludes to Hitler in his poem *Prayer Before Birth*: ‘Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God come near me’ |
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| ambiguity  when a word or phrase has a double meaning |
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| ambivalence  having mixed feelings about something  *example:* respecting the bravery of a soldier while believing that war is wrong |
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| analogy  illustrating the subject under discussion by making a parallel comparison |
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| analysis  the detailed study and explanation of a text |
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| anecdote  the recounting of a small incident to illustrate a point; sometimes humorous |
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| anthropomorphism  talking or writing about animals as though they were human beings  *example:* the animals in George Orwell’s novel, *Animal Farm* |
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| aphorism  the expression of a widely recognised truth about life in a standard form  *example:* ‘red sky at night, shepherd’s delight’ |
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| appeal  an appeal is a text, usually part of a campaign, most often aiming to fundraise |
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| association of ideas  when one idea calls to mind another, often used in advertising |
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| assonance  where two or more similar vowel sounds within words occur in sequence  *example:* ‘with wise lies lure me’ (Prayer Before Birth by Louis MacNeice) |
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| atmosphere  a general way of describing mood  *example:* in films, music is often used to create atmosphere |
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| **B** |

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| ballad  a long, narrative poem characterised by regularity of rhythm and rhyme |
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| bathos  comic shift from something important to something unimportant  *example:* ‘I got a box of chocolates for my birthday. The tragedy is, I don’t like chocolate!’ |
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| bias  promoting one, specific, point of view in a text and deliberately excluding others |
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| **C** |

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| cacophony  unpleasant, inharmonious sound effect |
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| caesura  a pause or break in the middle of a line of verse |
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| campaign  a series or collection of different text types with one specific aim, frequently used in fundraising and in advertising |
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| caption  brief text accompanying and explaining an image |
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| caricature  an exaggerated depiction of a person |
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| catharsis  the effect on the audience of the downfall of the tragic hero/ine; a feeling of relief or pity |
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| characterisation  the way a writer creates a character in order to convince the reader |
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| colloquial  informal language; often specific to particular social, local, or age-related groups |
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| comedy  a broad literary genre which ends happily or satisfactorily |
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| comic exaggeration  exaggeration for humorous effect |
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| commentary  close, detailed description of a literary or non-literary text. This can be either written or oral and in both cases is structured as an essay. |
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| connotation  the connotations of a word are its secondary meanings, overtones and implications |
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| consonance  the repetition of consonant sounds at the end of a word, often found in poetry and in advertisements  *example:* flip-flop |
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| conventions  The particular aspects of language use that typify a text type are called its language conventions. They are the aspects of language use you would expect to find in a given text type.  *example:* persuasive devices in an advertisement |
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| critique  a reasoned criticism of a piece of writing |
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| **D** |

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| dialogue  a conversation between two people |
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| diction  choice of vocabulary and phrases; for instance, can be conversational, rhetorical, formal or informal |
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| dissonance  organisation of words that is not harmonious but discordant |
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| dramatic irony  occurs in plays when the audience knows more about the events than the characters do, and so can understand the implications of the characters’ thoughts and actions while the characters cannot |
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| **E** |

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| editorial  the article in a newspaper or journal which expresses the publication’s opinions on the news |
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| elegy  a formal literary tribute to someone who has died |
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| emotive  creating emotion in the reader; not simply describing emotion |
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| end rhyme  where rhyme occurs at the end of lines of verse |
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| enjambement  where one line of poetry runs into the next, following the meaning, rather than stopping automatically at the end of the line  *example from Prayer Before Birth by Louis MacNeice:*  ‘I am not yet born; O fill me       With strength against those who would freeze my            humanity’ |
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| eye rhyme  where words look the same but sound different |
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| **F** |

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| fable  a story with a moral, intending to teach a lesson. George Orwell called Animal Farm a fable. |
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| figurative language  language that is not literal |
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| form  in poetry, usually the arrangement of lines and stanzas |
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| **G** |

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| genre  the word used to describe a literary text type |
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| **H** |

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| homonym  a word with more than one meaning, often used in puns  *example:* lead can describe a heavy metal and an object used be for walking dogs |
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| homophone  a word that sounds the same as another word but is spelled differently  *example: mussel* and *muscle* |
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| hyperbole  an extreme exaggeration  *example:* to say, ‘I’m starving,’ when you are only slightly hungry |
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| **I** |

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| iambic metre  a rhythmical pattern of two syllables with emphasis on the second. One unit of iambic metre is called a foot. |
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| iambic pentameter  five iambic feet |
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| imagery  words that create a picture in the reader’s mind, to make the thing being described clearer or more vivid |
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| internal rhyme  where rhyme appears in the middle of lines  *example:* ‘Old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me,’ (Prayer Before Birth by Louis MacNeice) |
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| interpretation  an understanding of the meaning of a text |
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| irony  saying one thing and meaning another |
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| **L** |

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| layout  the way a text is presented on a page (applies to media, rather than literary, texts) |
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| lexical set  repeated reference to one kind of imagery to create an overall effect |
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| lexis  vocabulary |
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| liturgical  language typical of prayer and religion |
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| lyrical  with song-like effect |
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| lyrics  the words of a song |
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| **M** |

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| metaphor  a comparison in which the thing being described is said to be something else to make the description more vivid |
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| metre  rhythm or beat |
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| monologue  a piece of writing which is meant to be spoken by one person |
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| mood  the feeling that is created in a text |
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| motif  a recurring idea or image in a text |
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| **N** |

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| narrative  Story |
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| narrative verse  poetry that tells a story |
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| narrative voice  the point of view in which the plot is narrated |
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| narrator  the person who tells the story |
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| **O** |

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| onomatopoeia  where a word sounds like the sound it is describing |
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| oxymoron  a description of something which appears to be its opposite, or impossible  *example:* an open secret |
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| **P** |

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| paradox  a statement which seems to be self-contradictory but upon reflection is logical  *example:* from the Bob Dylan song, Love Minus Zero/No Limit, ‘She knows there’s no success like failure…’ |
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| parody  an imitation of a person intending to ridicule them |
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| pastoral  describing a rural scene in an idealised, simple way; attributing idyllic qualities to the countryside and innocence to those who live there |
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| pathos  when a great feeling of pity is created in a visual or written text |
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| personification  giving human characteristics to something which is not human  *example:* the sunlight danced on the rippling water |
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| persuasive language  language used to encourage the reader to think or act in a particular way |
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| plot  the plan and development of a narrative |
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| protagonist  the main character in a literary work |
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| pun  a play on words |
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| **Q** |

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| quatrain  a four-line stanza |
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| **R** |

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| rationale  a reasoned explanation of a text |
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| refrain  a repeated section, usually in poetry |
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| repetition  saying or writing something more than once for a specific effect |
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| rhetoric  the conventions of speaking for an audience |
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| rhyme  the repetition of similar or identical sounds at the end of, or within, lines of poetry |
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| rhyme scheme  the pattern of rhyme in a poem, usually at the end of the lines |
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| rhyming couplet  a pair of consecutive lines in a poem which rhyme with each other. Sonnets end with a rhyming couplet |
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| rhythm  a pattern of strong and weak beats |
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| **S** |

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| satire  the ridicule of something the writer dislikes |
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| sensationalise  describing something in a exaggerated way to shock and engage the reader, frequently a characteristic of journalistic writing |
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| setting  where and when the events of a story, play, or poem, take place |
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| simile  a comparison in which the thing being described is said to be like another in order to make it more vivid  *example:* describing someone feeling unwell as ‘as white as a sheet’ |
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| soliloquy  a dramatic convention in which one person, alone on the stage, speaks their thoughts aloud |
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| sonnet  a poem with fourteen lines, ending with a rhyming couplet |
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| stanza  the grouping of lines in a poem; an individual verse in a poem |
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| stereotype  the attribution of certain characteristics to a specific group of people, often the product of prejudiced ideas |
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| stress  rhythmical emphasis (in poetry) |
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| structure  the organising and ordering of ideas so that they are effective |
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| style  the features that characterise a work, text type, publication or writer |
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| syllable  one of the sections of sound that a word can be divided into, relevant in metre and rhyme  *example:* au-to-ma-ton |
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| symbol  an image that is used recurrently to represent a particular meaning in the text |
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| syntax  choice and organisation of words in sentences |
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| **T** |

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| tautology  saying the same thing twice in different words, unnecessarily  *example:* ‘myself, I personally think…’ |
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| text  any verbal or visual production conveying meaning  (note: this meaning is particular to IB English A: Language and Literature) |
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| text type  the term used to describe a non-literary text |
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| theme  the underlying meaning or idea in a text |
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| tone  the character of a piece of writing, given to it by the voice of the narrator |
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| tragedy  a technical term applied to drama, but which more broadly applies to other literary forms. In drama, a play in which the main character makes a mistake, realises their mistake and pays for it, usually with death. |
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| **V** |

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| vernacular  the language of a local context |
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| verse  this can be either one stanza in a poem; or it can refer to the entirety of poetry. You might say: ‘… in the third verse of the poem…’ or ‘verse is my favourite literary genre’. |
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| **W** |

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| work  a literary text  (note: this meaning is particular to IB English A: Language and Literature) |